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Housekeepers' Chat

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Friday, August 8, 1930  
U. S. Department of Agriculture

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "From Corn Field to Can." Information and Menu from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home," and "Lamb as You Like It."

--ooOoo--

Today I'm going to answer a number of questions in one talk. All the questions are about canning corn, and I think every one will be answered in a few minutes.

Which varieties of corn are best for canning? When should they be gathered? What sort of jars or cans are best? What is meant by "Maine style" canned corn? How long should corn be processed? Is it necessary to use the steam pressure canner for corn? Is it all right to sweeten canned corn a little? Is there anything new this year about canning corn? Is the "hot pack" a new method of canning?

I hope that all my listeners who are thinking of canning some of the surplus corn in their gardens have already sent to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for the bulletin, "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home," because they will find in it exact directions for every step of the process, and an explanation of the reasons why the Department recommends using the steam pressure canner for corn and all non-acid vegetables. In case some of you want to undertake canning corn before the bulletin arrives, I will give brief directions now.

No new recommendations have been made by the Department on the subject of canning. For a number of years, the Bureau of Home Economics has been explaining that for successful home canning, corn, string beans, peas, in fact, all vegetables except tomatoes, need the high temperature of the steam pressure canner. Very troublesome bacteria are likely to lurk in these non-acid vegetables, and unless killed by adequate processing, they will make the canned foods spoil.

The "hot pack" so often mentioned is not a process, but a step in filling the cans. The fruit or vegetable to be canned is cooked for a short time. It is then packed boiling hot into the jars or cans. This shortens the time required to heat the material at the center of the can to the very high temperatures required. In the case of corn, which, as you know, is very densely packed when cut from the cob, it is very important to pack the tins or jars with boiling hot material.

So much for the general questions. Now for those especially about corn.





The garden varieties of corn are best for canning. They should be gathered about 17 to 25 days after silking, the exact time depending on the variety and the season. Have everything ready for the work of canning, so that after the corn is picked, you can begin at once to shuck, silk and clean it. Try to get it into the cans or jars within two hours after it is brought in from the garden.

Cut the corn from the cob without precooking. Add half as much water as corn by weight. Of course you have reliable scales included in your canning and preserving equipment, for you will need them many times. Heat the cut corn and water to the boiling point, add 1 teaspoonful of salt to each quart, and fill boiling hot into containers. If you want to use sugar too, you can add 2 teaspoons of sugar per quart when you add the salt. Process immediately at 15 pounds pressure, or 250 degrees Fahrenheit for 80, 75, or 70 minutes, according to the size and kind of container. Quart glass jars will require 80 minutes in the canner, pint glass jars 75, and No. 2 tin cans 70 minutes. This is the size generally used for commercially canned corn, as you have doubtless noticed. Corn should never be canned in the large No. 3 cans, because of the difficulty of heat penetration. The choice of glass or tin containers is a matter of personal preference and convenience.

There, I think I have covered all the questions. Oh, no -- there was one about "Maine style" corn. Maine style corn is what I have described, corn simply cut off the cob in whole kernels. Fresh corn is sometimes served in another way, with the centers of the kernels scored with a sharp knife and the grains then pressed from the hulls. But this style of cutting is not so good for home canned corn as it results in a thick, pasty mass and increases the difficulty of heat penetration.

I hope you have a pair of good tongs, or some other good implement for handling the hot cans when you take them from the steam pressure canner. Tin cans are plunged at once under cold water, but glass jars should be completely sealed, and inverted, so that they will cool gradually. Set them out of any possible draft. Of course you are in the habit of dating and labeling all your canned products so you can watch each lot and make sure that it is keeping.

And now for a menu for Sunday dinner. Are you ready to take it down in your notebooks? Roast Leg of Lamb; Stuffed Cucumbers; Black-eyed Peas or Shell Beans; Tomato Pickle; and Peach Cobbler. How does that appeal to you? You never heard of cooking cucumbers? I'll give you a recipe immediately. Meantime, in case you have any doubts about roasting lamb, look it up in your leaflet, "Lamb as You Like It." Of course you have a lamb leaflet in your kitchen library, but if you haven't, let me know at once, and I'll send it to you.

I never have lamb for dinner without thinking of the waiter on the dining-car last summer. When we asked what kind of meat was on the menu he said, all in one breath: "Ham, lamb, ram, sheep or mutton. Ham's all gone. What'll you have?" We took lamb.

Eight ingredients, in the recipe for Stuffed Cucumbers. Shall I read it now?



4 large cucumbers	1 cup dry bread crumbs
2 tablespoons chopped onion	1 cup tomato pulp
2 tablespoons chopped parsley	1 teaspoon salt, and
4 tablespoons butter or other fat	Pepper.

Eight ingredients for Stuffed Cucumbers: (Repeat).

Wash and pare the cucumbers. Cut them in half lengthwise. Scoop out as much of the seed portion as possible without breaking the fleshy part. Parboil the cucumber shells, in lightly salted water, for 10 minutes, and drain. Meanwhile cook the onion and parsley in the fat, add the other ingredients, and the cucumber pulp, and cook this mixture for 5 minutes. Fill the cucumber shells with stuffing, place them in a shallow baking dish, add a little water to keep them from sticking, and bake in a moderate oven for 15 minutes, or until the stuffing has browned on top. Serve in the baking dish.

I don't know of any dessert, I'd rather have when peaches are in season, than Peach Cobbler.

Billy always wants hard sauce with fruit cobblers. I make it with powdered, not Four-X sugar. Cream one-third of a cup of butter and then add three-fourths cup of sugar. Flavor with 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla and 1/8 teaspoon grated nutmeg if you like it. The secret of creamy hard sauce lies in long beating. Chill before serving.

On Monday I will have a delicious hot-weather luncheon menu for you, including a suggestion for using some of the cold roast lamb that will almost surely be left from Sunday's dinner.

Monday: "Cold Meat in Good Company."

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